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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [UP](#) [RS](#)  
SUBJECT: DFM YELISEYEV REVIEWS BILATERAL AGENDA

Classified By: Charge James Pettit. Reasons: 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

11. (C) In a September 14 meeting with Charge, Deputy Foreign Minister Yeliseyev:

-- urged the U.S. to agree on a format and dates for the Commission on Strategic Partnership;

-- expressed the hope that there would be an encounter between the two Presidents on the margins of UNGA;

-- outlined a program of bilateral engagement with Russia, including two FM meetings and one, perhaps two, Putin working visits to Ukraine;

-- expressed dismay at Ukraine MOD's abrupt cancellation of visit of their CHOD to the U.S.;

-- said MFA would have to respond publicly to the Russian Duma's bill on the use of force. End Summary.

Commission on Strategic Partnership

12. (C) Deputy FM Kostyantyn Yeliseyev invited Charge to the MFA September 14 to review the bilateral agenda. Yeliseyev affirmed that since acting FM Khandogiy would in all likelihood remain as acting FM until after the Presidential election, Yeliseyev had assumed responsibility for U.S. relations. Yeliseyev expressed the hope that the U.S. would soon finalize its position on how to structure the new Ukraine-U.S. Commission on Strategic Partnership. He underlined that Ukraine wanted to accelerate the process and hold the inaugural meeting of the Commission as soon as possible. Yeliseyev reiterated the Ukrainian position that acting FM Khandogiy and Secretary Clinton formally chair the Commission. However, he understood that the U.S. favored holding the first session of the Commission in Washington at the level of coordinators -- which would be A/S Gordon and himself. The GOU would be agreeable to this.

UNGA

13. (C) President Yushchenko will be in New York September 21-24. Yushchenko plans to attend President Obama's speech at the General Assembly. Yeliseyev said that the Ukrainian side hopes there can be a short meeting between the two on the margins of the UNGA. This would demonstrate the significance of Ukraine to the U.S. and would be important to Yushchenko politically. Yeliseyev said that acting FM Khandogiy also hopes to meet with U/S Burns on the margins of the UNGA. The MFA would welcome confirmation of the date and time for such a meeting.

Invitations

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¶4. (C) Yeliseyev reiterated the GOU's interest in hosting a visit to Ukraine by Secretary Clinton. The GOU would also welcome a visit by A/S Gordon. Yeliseyev observed that A/S Gordon had traveled around the region, including recently to Moscow, but had thus far not visited Ukraine. Some in the Ukrainian media, which follows such matters closely, are interpreting this as the U.S. ignoring Ukraine.

¶5. (C) Charge replied that Vice President Biden's recent visit made clear the importance that the U.S. attaches to Ukraine. Further, we maintain a steady stream of senior visits, such as that of Assistant Secretary of Defense Vershbow (and delegation) later this month. Ukraine is and will remain an important destination for senior U.S. officials.

#### Russian Engagement

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¶6. (C) Yeliseyev noted that FM Lavrov and acting FM Khandogiy have a meeting scheduled on the margins of the UNGA. In addition, they have another meeting planned in the course of an October 6-7 bilateral, envisioned at the level of Prime Ministers, to be held in Kharkiv. Bilateral economic issues will be the focus; Governors from nearby areas of Russia and Ukraine will also participate. Yeliseyev pointed out that MFA had proposed issuing a joint statement at the meeting; the Russian side had refused.

¶7. (C) Heads of government from the CIS will also meet in

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Crimea (probably Yalta) on November 19. Yeliseyev said the MFA understood Putin probably would attend. Russian DFM Denisov recently told Ukrainian Amb. Gryshchenko that Putin was unlikely to attend both the Crimea and the Kharkiv meetings. Putin did not want to appear to be interfering in Ukraine's presidential election by visiting too often.

¶8. (C) (In a September 15 meeting with Charge, Deputy Prime Minister Nemyria agreed that the optic of two Putin visits in such a short period would raise eyebrows in the context of the Presidential campaign. He thought that the timing of the PM meeting in Kharkiv could be moved to be just before or after the CIS meeting, which would allow Putin to do both in one trip.)

#### Abrupt Cancellation of CHOD Visit

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¶9. (C) Charge raised the issue of the abrupt cancellation on September 12 -- with less than 24 hours notice -- of the visit to the U.S. of Chief of the General Staff Kyrychenko. This was to have been a major mil-mil visit, with meetings to include Admiral Mullen and General Petraeus. Charge expressed disappointment with acting Defense Minister Ivashchenko's decision to cancel -- and the eleventh hour timing.

¶10. (C) Yeliseyev expressed complete surprise over the cancellation. He termed it "inexcusable, inappropriate and not the policy of the Foreign Ministry." He left from his chair to call Ivashchenko for an explanation, but was unable to reach him. Yeliseyev said he would relay the "very depressing news" immediately to acting FM Khandogiy, who was soon to leave with Yushchenko for a visit to Turkmenistan. Ivashchenko was accompanying the President as well. (Ivashenko's travel with the President was the stated reason for the cancellation; he said he could not permit the CHOD to leave Ukraine while he too was away.)

¶11. (C) Yeliseyev observed that he and Ivashchenko had been together late Saturday night for a Cabinet of Ministers meeting on the national budget. Ivashchenko had sat near

Yeliseyev, but had mentioned nothing about the cancellation.  
Yeliseyev offered to get back to Charge with an explanation.

¶12. (C) (In his September 15 meeting with Charge, DPM Nemyria also expressed surprise at the cancellation. Nemyria said that the President had taken more than six Ministers with him to Turkmenistan leaving empty seats at the Council of Ministers' final budget meeting on September 14. Nemyria assumed the cancellation was Ivashchenko's decision, presumably with the consent of the President.)

#### Budget -----

¶13. (C) Speaking of the budget, Yeliseyev termed the situation "very difficult" with a planned deficit of four percent. He did not expect that, with the upcoming election, the Rada would approve the budget by the end of the year. He observed that, once again, there would be no funding for a NATO information program in Ukraine. Nonetheless, he noted that the Cabinet of Ministers was poised to approve on September 16 the program related to Ukraine's Annual National Plan (ANP) with NATO. This would allow the 40 ministries and agencies involved to implement the ANP. (DPM Nemyria confirmed to Charge September 15 that the Cabinet of Ministers was ready to approve the plan.)

#### Russian Duma Bill on Use of Military -----

¶14. (C) Yeliseyev said the MFA was pondering how to respond to the Russian Duma's recent passage in a first reading of the draft law on the use of Russian military forces. The bill had generated intense media attention in Ukraine, where it is seen as expanding the scope for Russian military involvement in the area Russia considers its zone of privileged interests. Yeliseyev observed that the level of media interest in Ukraine demands a GOU response. He said the GOU would likely issue a measured statement, as Yushchenko had done after Medvedev's August letter. Yeliseyev noted that the Rada was currently reviewing drafts of its own statement in reaction to Medvedev's August letter. Four drafts are under consideration; however, since disagreements in the Rada on relations with Russia are so broad, none might pass.

#### Energy -----

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¶15. (SBU) Ukraine continues to push for the "re-reversing" of the Odesa-Brody pipeline, Yeliseyev said. Ukraine would welcome another visit by Ambassador Morningstar.

#### Ambassadors' Conference -----

¶16. (SBU) Yeliseyev volunteered that all Ukrainian Ambassadors -- from 130 missions -- would be in Kyiv October 12-14 for an MFA conference on current challenges in Ukrainian diplomacy. Off the cuff, he remarked that MFA would welcome the chance to have Secretary Clinton address the Ambassadors if she wanted to time a visit to Kyiv to coincide with the convocation.  
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